

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 INR-05

CIAE-00 PRS-01 L-01 OMB-01 MC-02 IGA-01 /042 W

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R 071139Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3895

INFO DOD

CINCPAC

S E C R E T BANGKOK 8264

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MARR, RW R

SUBJECT: DISPOSITION OF FORMER GVN AND GKR US-

SUPPLIED MILITARY EQUIPMENT

REF: BANGKOK 8143

1. FOLLOWING UP ON YESTERDAY'S CABINET MEETING AND
CHARGE'S DISCUSSION WITH CHATCHAI (REFTEL), ADCM
AND COMUSMACTHAI CALLED ON SUPREME COMMAND CHIEF OF
STAFF GENERA
KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN AT KRIANGSAK'S
HOUSE 10 P.M., MAY 6. THIS WAS ONLY TIME AVAILABLE,
SINCE KRIANGSAK IS LEAVING TODAY, MAY 7, FOR KUALA
LUMPUR. IN ANY EVENT, LATE HOUR UNDERLINED URGENCY
AND GRAVITY OF SUBJECT.

2. WE BEGAN BY SUMMARIZING FOR KRIANGSAK RESULTS
OF CABINET MEETING AS ANNOUNCED BY RTG AND AS
COMMUNICATED TO CHARGE BY FOREIGN MINISTER.
WE EXPRESSED ASTONISHMENT AT POSITION BEING
TAKEN BY RTG, POINTING OUT THAT SECDEF HAD
CLEARLY AND PUBLICLY ASSERTED US TITLE TO EQUIP-
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MENT IN QUESTION ONLY DAY BEFORE, AND THAT

EMBASSY HAD FORMALLY AND IN WRITING NOTIFIED SUPREME COMMAND OF THE SAME. WE WARNED THAT IF RTG CONTINUED TO SUGGEST THAT TURNOVER OF EQUIPMENT TO COMMUNIST REGIMES WAS A NEGOTIABLE POSSIBILITY, REACTION OF USG WOULD BE VERY STRONG. WE SAID THAT ANY SUCH ACTION WOULD STRIKE AT THE ROOTS OF US-THAI SECURITY RELATIONS, AND THAT IT WAS DAMAGING EVEN TO DISCUSS SUCH A TURNOVER AS A POSSIBILITY.

3. CONTINUING, WE POINTED OUT THAT WE HAD OFFERED CONSIDERABLE CAMBODIAN-VIETNAMESE ASSETS TO RTG, AND OBSERVED THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THAT OFFER IF THERE WAS THE SLIGHTEST UNCERTAINTY AS TO ULTIMATE DISPOSITION. MOREOVER, WE POINTED OUT, IF RTG QUESTIONED OUR TITLE, HOW COULD IT ACCEPT OUR OFFER OF EQUIPMENT? FINALLY, WE CAUTIONED THAT SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM COULD BE JEOPARDIZED BY PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO POSITION BEING TAKEN BY RTG.

4. KRIANGSAK SEEMED FULLY IMPRESSED WITH THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION. HE POINTED OUT THAT HE HIMSELF HAD STIMULATED THE SENDING OF LETTERS TO SUPREME COMMAND BY BOTH THE EMBASSY AND MACTHAI ASSERTING US TITLE TO ALL EQUIPMENT. USING THESE LETTERS, HE HAD SENT A MEMORANDUM TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE PRAMAN ARGUING FOR THE US POSITION AND AGAINST THE NOTION THAT TURNOVER TO COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED OR PLACED IN THE REALM OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION. HE SAID THAT GENERAL KRIT SIWARA AND THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE HAD AGREED WITH HIS POSITION. HE COULD NOT EXPLAIN THE CABINET'S ACTION. HE SAID THAT SINCE HE HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN ANY OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF THE CABINET DECISION, THE THAI MILITARY WERE CONTINUING TO ACT ON THE INSTRUCTIONS PREVIOUSLY ISSUED, THAT IS, NOT TO INTERFERE WITH MOVEMENT OF CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE MAP ASSETS BY US OUT OF SECRET

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COUNTRY.

5. WE TOLD KRIANGSAK THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE NOW TO PLAY GAMES AND MOVE EQUIPMENT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. CHARGE, IN RESPONSE TO CHATCHAI'S REQUEST, HAD AGREED TO SUSPEND ONWARD MOVEMENT OF ASSETS, WHILE REASSERTING US POSITION ON TITLE. WE SAID THAT RTG WOULD THEREFORE HAVE TO REVIEW ITS

POSITION SO THAT A CLEAR AND OPEN RESOLUTION OF
THE PROBLEM COULD BE OBTAINED.

6. KRIANGSAK AT ONE POINT IMPLIED THAT THE
MATTER WAS BEYOND HIS CONTROL, BUT WHEN WE
ASKED HIM IF HE WAS WASHING HIS HANDS OF IT,
HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AND THAT HE WOULD CARRY
IT FORWARD TO KRIT IMMEDIATELY.

MASTERS

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NNN

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